

Good afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Kimberly-Turner Haugabook, a person in sustained recovery since August 13, 1997. I work for Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery and am the Senior Peer Service Coordinator for the New London Recovery Community Center. I am here today to share with you how living in a sober house helped me get to where I am today- Almost 10 years later- I will forever be grateful.

Having the opportunity to live in a sober house at one of the most vulnerable times in my life is indescribable- I can't begin to explain how vital that therapeutic living environment meant to me at that time- It was the difference between being homeless and helpless- It was my home, it was more than a sober house- sometimes we throw that term around not really realizing that we are talking about providing a home for people who suffer with the same disease- addiction/alcoholism.

I lived with women who understood, identified, and supported each other. Initially we didn't know one another- all we knew is that we couldn't do it alone- we needed one another to get better- to lean on- to support one another- We became a family. We shared a bond & that bond was recovery.

I'm here today as a testimony to put my face and voice on record- We need sober housing, we need funding to provide more sober housing- We need your support and understanding- we need you to hear, see, and remember what so many before me have stated here today. We need you all to be willing to allow the recovery community to participate in the development of any type of regulation for sober housing. We know what works and many of us are here today because we care- We are not here for ourselves but we are here for those coming up behind us- those who are being released from substance abuse facilities throughout the State and don't necessarily have a loving family waiting for them to come home. Many of us didn't have family support once we completed our treatment programs-

I heard someone ask- What's the rate of success for these houses? What happens to these people once they leave these houses? Well, many of us showed up here today. We recover- We become responsible community members- we get married- we raise our children- we participate in our local churches- we go back to college- we become professionals- we become state rep's & city officials- we become entrepreneurs- we buy homes- and of course- we vote- as a matter of fact we look like you, you & you.

I admonish you today please do not create another level of bureaucracy in the name of helping which would essentially hurt the very people it who need help the most.

I am hopeful that we- the recovery community can work with you- our state elected officials in coming up with an alternative plan that will satisfy our local communities- Why do our local communities feel they need protection from sober housing? We need to work together- and continue to help those who depend on sober housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee on this extremely important issue. Please do not put a statute in place that may well jeopardize access to housing for persons who are striving to recover their lives and become productive members of society. Please consider working with DMHAS and the recovery community to accommodate community needs.